

Ken Uston's **PROFESSIONAL** **BLACKJACK**™

**THE
ULTIMATE
GAME**

**THE
WINNINGEST
SYSTEM**

Ken Uston's PROFESSIONAL BLACKJACK™

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GUIDE TO CHARTS

- 1) The following color codes apply to all charts:



= stand



= hit



= split



= double down

- 2) On all the Basic Strategy and Uston Simple Plus/Minus charts (A through H), S = surrender, if conventional surrender is allowed.
- 3) On the Uston Simple Plus/Minus charts (E through H), some of the boxes are divided into three sections: the **left** section covers **minus** strategy; the **center** section covers **basic** strategy; and the **right** section covers **plus** strategy.

1. WHY BLACKJACK CAN BE BEATEN

Casino games, with the exception of blackjack, have a predictable statistical advantage in favor of the House which generally ranges between a 1-25% edge, depending upon the game and the specific rules variations enforced. Keno, for instance, has an approximate 25% edge to the House. Slot machines are set to yield a 3-24% edge to the House in American casinos. In Atlantic City, slot machines are set at a maximum 17% advantage to the House. Double zero Roulette yields a 5.27% advantage to the House. Craps yields 0.6-16.7% advantage to the House depending upon the betting strategy employed by the player.

Blackjack is unlike the other casino games in two important respects. First, the House advantage is dependent upon the decisions made by the player. Because of this, the House advantage varies with the skill of the player. A skilled blackjack player using a legitimate card counting system can actually gain a statistical advantage over the House as high as 2-3%. Utilizing this seemingly small edge, many skilled players have made fortunes over extended periods of play. Second, blackjack is a game composed of a series of dependent, rather than independent events. In games which depend upon the roll of the dice or the spin of the wheel, each result stands on its own and has no effect on any succeeding rolls or spins. In Craps, for instance, the odds of throwing a seven are 1 out of 6 of the 36 possible combinations. If 2 sevens are thrown consecutively, the chance of throwing a seven on the next throw are exactly the same as they were, and will always be: 1 out of 6. This law of independent events applies to Keno, Roulette, and slot machines as well.

Blackjack is a game of dependent events because it's based on the dealing of cards from a deck or shoe containing multiple decks. As cards are used and placed in the discard pile, the character of the pile of cards remaining to be dealt is altered. For instance, if in the first round of hands in a single deck game, four aces are dealt, the chance of obtaining a blackjack in subsequent hands dealt

from that deck is nil. When the House gets a blackjack and the player doesn't have one, the player loses his bet. When a player has a blackjack and the House doesn't, the player gets paid 3 to 2. Thus, in our imaginary game where the aces have been depleted in the first round, the value of the remaining cards to be dealt has been significantly diminished from the player's point of view. The ace is the single most valuable card for the player, and the early depletion of them from the deck is to the player's disadvantage. The single most valuable card to the House is the five. This is because the dealer must hit his hands until he reaches 17. If his initial two cards total to a hard 12, drawing a 5 will allow him to reach 17. If the dealer draws a hard 16 as his initial hand, a 5 drawn will bring his total to 21. Thus, a 5 can save a dealer who has drawn a stiff (a hard 12, 13, 14, 15, or 16). No card other than a 5 can save every type of stiff.

In the long run, the ace is the most valuable card to the player, and the five is the least valuable. The other cards in the deck are of intermediate value to the player. The ideal card counting system would require keeping track of every denomination as it is played. With that data base, the ideal playing and betting strategy could be developed for each hand. Such a system would be too unwieldy for all but the rare memory expert. Because of this, systems have been developed to allow the player to gauge the value of the remaining cards to be dealt without having to memorize every card previously dealt from the deck. Systems which require side counts only of aces or of no cards at all are termed "non-parameterized." The Uston **ADVANCED POINT COUNT (APC)** is the most powerful non-parameterized system currently available. **Keri Uston's Professional Blackjack** includes the professional level APC as well as two less powerful but easier-to-master systems: The Uston Simple Plus/Minus System and the Uston Advanced Plus/Minus System. Before entering the world of card counting, let's review the rules of blackjack.

2. RULES OF THE GAME

BASIC RULES

The Object of the Game

The object of the game is to draw cards whose sum is greater than that of the dealer without going over 21 and "busting." In other words, the goal of the game is to **beat the dealer**. Ties between the player and the dealer are considered just that in most casinos and no exchange of money is made. Another name for a tie is "push." The player always plays his hand before the dealer plays the House's hand, so if the player draws cards yielding a total greater than 21, the player busts and loses his bet. Even if the dealer subsequently busts the House hand, the player has already lost and his money and cards have been irrevocably collected.

Number of Players

At most casino tables 1 to 7 players are allowed to sit and play against a given dealer.

Number of Decks

While blackjack began as a single deck game, many casinos have multiple deck games. Single and double deck games are usually dealt from a hand-held pile. Games involving three or more decks are usually dealt from a shuffled pile of cards which are contained in a dispensing apparatus termed a "shoe."

Value of Cards

Two's through tens have the same numerical value as their face value. Aces are valued at either 1 or 11 at the option of the player. Hands containing an ace which can be counted as an eleven without busting the hand are termed a "soft" hand. All other hands are referred to as "hard" hands. All picture cards are valued as 10.

Naturals or Blackjack

If the first two cards dealt to a player are an ace and a ten value card, the player has a natural or "blackjack." In most American casinos, if the player has a blackjack and the dealer doesn't, the player is paid at the rate of 3 to 2 for his original bet. If

the dealer has a blackjack and the player doesn't, the player only loses his original bet. If both the dealer and the player have blackjack, the hand is considered a tie or "push" and no money is exchanged.

The Deal

Each player and the dealer are dealt two cards in sequence, one at a time, with the deal going from left to right from the dealer's perspective. The player's first two cards are dealt either face up or face down depending on the rules of the House. Of the dealer's first two cards, one is dealt face up and the other face down. The dealer's face-up card is referred to as the "up" card and its value is used as a key piece of information by the player in developing a playing strategy. The dealer's face-down card is termed the "hole" card. In Nevada, if the dealer's up card is a 10 value card or an ace, the dealer will discreetly check the value of the hole card. If he has a blackjack, he will reveal it to the players and settle the bets immediately. In Atlantic City, the dealer never checks the value of his hole card until the players have completed playing their hands. If the dealer has a blackjack, the players have a liability limited only to their original bets. Thus, in Atlantic City, if a player in the course of playing his hand happened to double his bet and the dealer had a blackjack, the player would still only lose his original bet.

Hitting or Standing

After the cards have been dealt, in Atlantic City (and after the dealer has checked his hole card if necessary in Nevada) the players have an opportunity to play their hands. Play proceeds from the dealer's left around the table to the dealer's right. A player may draw as many cards as he wants as long as his total does not exceed 21. If the first two cards are dealt face down, it is expected that the player will declare his hand bust when he knows that the total value of the cards exceeds 21. In face-up cards, the dealer will automatically pick up the player's cards when he busts and collect the player's bet. If a player has not busted and wishes to have no more cards, he signals to the dealer that he wishes to stand pat and the dealer proceeds to allow the next player to play his hand.

Doubling Down

In most Las Vegas casinos and Atlantic City, the player may double the amount of his original bet after looking at his two cards. Upon doubling down, the player automatically receives one additional card. Thus, a player only doubles down in situations where he feels that one card drawn in addition to the original two cards will have a high chance of making the hand a winning hand. Some casinos allow the player to double down against any first two cards. Other casinos have more restrictive rules. In Northern Nevada, doubling down is only allowed against totals of 10 or 11 for the first two cards. These restrictions are disadvantageous to the skilled player who knows the relative value of the cards remaining to be dealt and the chance of making a more exotic double down situation work to his favor.

Splitting Pairs

If the player's first two cards are identical in value,¹ the player may "split" them by putting them side-by-side and placing an amount equal to his original bet in back of each card. A second card is then dealt to each of the split cards. The player now plays each of these sub-hands as separate hands. The hand on the player's right is played first and the player may draw additional cards or stand. Some casinos allow the player to double down on sub-hands while others do not. If the second card dealt to a split hand card is again of the same value, some casinos will allow re-splitting so that even more sub-hands are developed. If the player is originally dealt two aces and splits them, most casinos give the player only a second card to each ace with no further cards to be drawn. Should the second card to a split ace be a 10 value card, the value of a player's hand would be 21 but the player would not have a blackjack since it is not a "natural." A natural can only occur if it is composed of the first two cards originally dealt to a player. This means that the player may win the sub-hand with 21 but that he will not get paid 3 to 2 for blackjack.

Insurance

If the dealer's up card is an ace, most casinos allow the player to make a side bet referred to as "insurance." The amount of the side bet must be less than or equal to one-half of the player's original bet. If it then turns out that the dealer has blackjack the House pays the player at a ratio of 2 to 1

on his insurance bet. If the dealer does not have blackjack, the player loses the insurance side bet.

Shuffling

In single-deck games, the timing of the shuffle is often left to the discretion of the dealer. In many places, it is the practice to shuffle after approximately two-thirds of the deck has been depleted; but this practice varies greatly. In multiple-deck games, a "cut-card" (a Joker or colored plastic card) is slid into the stack of cards after they have been shuffled. When the cut card is reached, the dealer will either continue that hand in progress and then shuffle or shuffle immediately, depending upon the rules of the House. How far into the stack of cards the cut card is placed varies in different casinos.

Most novice blackjack players cannot understand how a card counter can profitably work against a shoe containing multiple decks when a large number of cards will never be dealt because they are behind the cut card. What must be understood is that the card counter is using a system which provides a running statistical analysis of the cards remaining to be dealt based on the cards already depleted from the shoe. The skilled player then uses this analysis of the shoe to influence his playing and betting strategy. It does not matter that the player may never see a specific card or cards because they are far behind the cut card. He is playing by the law of averages. In the long run shoes will unfold as statistically predicted, even though in any given shoe all of the valuable cards that the skilled player predicts remain in the shoe could theoretically be hidden well behind the cut card and not in the group of cards actually remaining to be played. The main disadvantage to the card counter of having a cut card placed closer to the front of the shoe is that after a shoe begins to develop into one which is very favorable, the counter will have fewer hands to exploit this favorable situation before the cut card appears.

RULES VARIATIONS

In Atlantic City, all casinos play the game by the same rules, which are all set by the New Jersey Casino Control Commission. In casinos at other locations, the rules are set by the individual casinos and exhibit great variation. Some rules variations are advantageous to the House, some advantageous to the player and others are of no statistical import. The rules variations discussed below are embedded in **Ken Uston's Professional**

¹In most American casinos, non-identical tens (e.g., 10, Jack, Queen, King, etc.) can be split since they have the same value. In some European casinos, only identical 10's can be split.

Blackjack's training program and allow you to establish a specific game identical to one found in almost any given casino. A few extremely exotic rules variations are not included since they are not of practical value and are rarely encountered in actual playing situations.

Cards Dealt Face Up or Face Down

The first two cards dealt to each player may be dealt either face up or face down, depending on the rules of the House. Subsequent cards drawn to these hands are dealt face up. When a player busts his hand he is expected to turn over the two face-down cards. The dealer then confirms that the hand is bust and collects the cards. It is at this time that the counter sitting at the table will see these two cards and should add their values to his running count. In the long run, it makes no difference that the counter has not seen these cards until the other player has either gone bust, split or had his hand settled. Theoretically, in some instances, a lack of knowledge of the value of these temporarily hidden cards could have a deleterious effect on the counter's playing strategy.

European No-Hole Card

Some European casinos have the dealer take an up card but no hole card when the hands are originally dealt. After the players have completed playing their hands, the dealer then draws the second card and proceeds to play his hand. This variation is statistically disadvantageous to the player.

When the Dealer Checks for His Blackjack

In Nevada, if the dealer's up card is an ace or 10, he will discreetly check his hole card to determine if he has blackjack. If the dealer has blackjack, he will settle all bets at that time. In Atlantic City and some other locations, the dealer does not check for blackjack until after the players have completed play of their hands. If it turns out that the dealer has blackjack, the players' liabilities are limited only to their original bet.

Blackjack Payoff

In most American casinos and casinos throughout the world, a player gets paid 3 to 2 for a blackjack. There are occasional variations in this rule including one where the player gets paid even money for his blackjack and an equivalent amount of the win is placed "en prison" as a contribution to the player's bet on his next hand.

How the Dealer Plays His Hand

The dealer plays his hand by a prescribed set of rules which are uniform throughout the casino he is working in. He is not allowed to affect any personal style of play and thus, the player is really only playing against the rules of the House rather than the skill of its dealers. Almost universally, the dealer must draw cards to his hand until it has a value of 17 or greater. If the dealer hand has a value of 17 or greater, he is not permitted to draw any additional cards. Thus, if the dealer is working a table where there are seven players, all standing pat with 18, and he is holding 17 for the House, no additional cards can be drawn to the dealer's hand in order to defeat the players. The dealer is then forced to stand pat and pay all of the players. The only rule variation which is commonly seen and which affects the dealer's play is the one regarding the dealer's options when he draws a "soft" 17. Some casinos require the dealer to stand whenever he draws a soft 17 while others require the dealer to hit in the situation. It is favorable to the player to have the dealer forced to stand on a soft 17.

Doubling Down

Some casinos allow the player to double down on any two cards initially dealt to him. Others restrict doubling down to initial hands totaling 10 or 11 only. Some restrict to 9, 10, and 11 only, or 11 only. In general, these restrictions are to the detriment of the players.

Doubling Down After the Third Card Has Been Drawn

A somewhat exotic rule occasionally seen is one which allows the player to double down even after he has drawn a third card to his hand (or even more than three cards). This rule is extremely advantageous to the player.

Splitting Non-identical Tens

In most American casinos, non-identical tens can be split. Thus, if the player is dealt a Queen and a Jack, since they are both ten-valued cards, they can be split as if they were the same cards. In some European casinos, the cards must be identical to be split. In those casinos, a Jack and a Jack can be split while a Jack and a Queen cannot.

Re-Splitting

Some casinos allow the player to split his hand once; and if an equal-valued card is drawn to one of

the split cards, these casinos allow the player to re-split those two cards so that the player now has three hands. Some casinos allow this process to be performed as many times as the opportunity arises. Infinite re-splitting is the most favored of these variations for the player. Some casinos restrict re-splitting to only two, three or four times.

Re-Splitting of Aces

Most casinos in America allow a player to draw only one card per ace when aces are split. Some casinos will allow the player to re-split aces if an ace is drawn to a split ace. This variation is in favor of the player.

Drawing Additional Cards to Split Aces

In some cases casinos allow players to draw additional cards after split aces have been given their second card. This variation is uncommon and very favorable to the player.

Early Surrender

This rule allows the player to surrender his cards and lose only half of his original bet after the hands have been dealt and before the dealer checks his hand for blackjack. This rule is extremely favorable for the player.

Conventional Surrender

This variation allows the player to surrender his cards and yield half of his original bet only after the dealer has checked his hand for blackjack. This rule is very favorable for the player but not as favorable as early surrender.

Five Cards Earns Half a Win

In some foreign casinos, if the player draws five cards without busting he is automatically guaranteed pay-off equivalent to at least half of the original bet even if the dealer gets closer to 21 without busting.

3. BASIC STRATEGY

Basic Strategy is the foundation of card counting. It represents the correct playing strategy for the first hand dealt from the deck, and for any hand in which the player is unaware of the content of the cards remaining in the dealer's shoe — in other words, when the player is not yet employing a card-counting system.

While all the strategies covered by **Ken Uston's Professional Blackjack** were derived by a rigorous computerized statistical analysis of the game, Basic Strategy is limited to the cards shown in any given hand. It gives the correct playing decision for any combination of the player's two cards and the dealer's up card. For instance, many players would be reluctant to hit a hard 16 versus a dealer's up card of 7. Statistical analysis, however, shows that if the player stands in this situation, he will lose the hand 48% of the time; while if he draws an additional card, he will lose only 37% of the time. Granted, many of his losses will come by busting the hand, but the best odds — and therefore the best strategy — are to hit on a hard 16 versus a dealer's up card of 7.

Basic strategy varies somewhat with the rules variations in effect in a given game. There is only one correct basic strategy for each set of rules. The basic strategies taught both in this manual and in the **Ken Uston's Professional Blackjack** computer program take this into account.

Basic strategy is simply the educated basic approach to the game and therefore the common basis for any responsible card counting system.

Insurance

A player using basic strategy should never take insurance. A common misconception among novice players is that one should always insure his own blackjack. This is a bad bet in both the single and multiple deck games. To the basic strategy player, this move yields a negative expectation of almost 8%. Since what you are really betting on is whether the dealer's hole card is a 10-value card, only a card counter who has a gauge on the ratio of tens to non-tens remaining the shoe can intelligently select this option. To repeat, **basic strategy players should never take insurance.**

We introduce in this chapter our color coded charts to facilitate the easy learning of blackjack strategy. These charts are based on a table in which the horizontal axis shows the ten

possibilities for a dealer's up card (note again that a 10, Jack, Queen, and King are all equivalent ten valued cards) and the vertical axis of the table presents all of the possibilities for the player's hands. These hands represent not only the initial two cards of the player but also subsequent stages of the hand as cards are drawn.

The upper part of the table represents the player's hard hands and the possibilities are five through 21. If the player is initially dealt a 2, and a 3, he has a hard five. If he then draws an additional 2, his hand is now a hard 7. The correct response for the basic strategy player is colored in the box which is intersected by the player's hand and the dealer's up-card. For instance, the correct response when a player's hand is 16 and the dealer's up-card is 7, is green or "hit."

The mid-portions of these tables contain the player's possible pair splitting hands. These situations only apply with the player's first two cards.

The bottom portion of each table contains the player's soft hands; A, 2 to A, 10. A, 10 may represent a blackjack or a hand that was acquired after drawing cards such as 5, 5, ace. This table of soft hands can be referred to as the player draws additional cards. For instance, if the player is initially dealt A, 4 and draws a 2, his hand is now A, 6. If he draws another 2 the hand is now A, 8. If he draws again and receives a 3, the hand is now converted to a hard 12.

Once you learn to play basic strategy, you will have mastered the first skill on the road to becoming a card counter. The average expectation for the basic strategy player varies from casino to casino depending on the rules variations in effect. Table 3.1 shows the effect of various rules changes on the basic strategy player. At most American casinos, basic strategy play yields extend from a fraction of a percentage advantage to an approximate 1% disadvantage against the House, depending upon the rules. Thus, by mastering basic strategy, you will have brought yourself about even with the House.

The basic strategy moves are best learned by a flash card routine. **Ken Uston's Professional Blackjack** provides such a routine — the basic strategy drill — which can help you quickly learn these moves. We recommend that you do your initial training with one set of casino rules. For instance, all Atlantic City casinos play by the same

rules and if you train for that one set of rules, you will be training to play at nine or more different casinos. You must master basic strategy and make it an almost unconscious response. After you do this, you will be ready to enter the world of card counting. Three different levels of card counting strategies are included in this program: the Uston

Simple Plus/Minus Count, Uston Advanced Plus/Minus Count and the Uston Advanced Point Count. They are of increasing difficulty to learn but the most advanced system (the Uston APC) is a professional level card counting system and the most powerful non-parameterized system ever developed.

**EFFECT OF RULES VARIATIONS ON THE
BASIC STRATEGY PLAYER**

Variations	Effect on the Player's Advantage
Early Surrender	+0.624%
Conventional Surrender	
Single deck game	+0.02
Multiple deck game	+0.07
Double Down on Split Pairs	+0.13
Drawing to Split Aces	+0.14
Re-splitting Aces	+0.03
Double Down on 3 or More Cards	+0.20
No Resplitting of Pairs	-0.05
No Doubling On:	
Hard 11	-0.89
Hard 10	-0.56
Hard 9	-0.14
Hard 8	0.00
Soft Hands	-0.14
Dealer Hits Soft 17	-0.20
No Hole Card for Dealer	-0.13
Two Deck Game (vs. Single Deck)	-0.35
Four Deck Game (vs. Single Deck)	-0.51
Six Deck Game (vs. Single Deck)	-0.60

TABLE 3.1

BASIC STRATEGY

Chart A

Single Deck • No Double Down on Split • No Surrender

PLAYER'S HAND	DEALER'S UP CARD									
	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	A
5										
6										
7										
8				5,3 4,4	5,3 4,4					
9										
10										
11										
12			10,2							
13	10,3									
14										
15									S (ex 8,7)	
16								>2 cards	S	S
17										
18										
19										
20										
21										
A,A										
2,2	X									
3,3	X	X								
4,4			X	X	X					
5,5										
6,6						X				
7,7							X		S	
8,8										
9,9										
10,10										
A,2										
A,3										
A,4										
A,5										
A,6										
A,7										*
A,8										
A,9										
A,10										

NEVER TAKE INSURANCE. *THIS SHOULD BE "HIT" IF THE DEALER IS ALLOWED TO HIT SOFT 17.
X = SHOULD BE SPLIT IF DOUBLE DOWN ON SPLIT PAIRS ALLOWED.

BASIC STRATEGY

Chart B

Single Deck • Double Down Only with 10 or 11 • No Surrender • Dealer Hits Soft 17 • No Double Down on Split Hands

PLAYER'S HAND	DEALER'S UPCARD									
	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	A
5										
6										
7										
8										
9										
10										
11										
12			10:2							
13	10:3									
14										
15									S ^(ex) _(8,7)	
16								>2 cards	S	S
17										
18										
19										
20										
21										
A,A										
2,2										
3,3										
4,4										
5,5										
6,6										
7,7									S	
8,8										
9,9										
10,10										
A2										
A3										
A4										
A5										
A6										
A7										
A8										
A9										
A10										

NEVER TAKE INSURANCE. > 2 = YOU HAVE 3 OR MORE CARDS.

BASIC STRATEGY

Chart C

Multiple Deck • No Double Down on Split • No Surrender

PLAYER'S HAND	DEALER'S UP CARD									
	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	A
5										
6										
7										
8										
9										
10										
11										
12										
13										
14										
15										
16										
17										
18										
19										
20										
21										
A,A										
2,2										
3,3										
4,4										
5,5										
6,6										
7,7										
8,8										
9,9										
10,10										
A,2										
A,3										
A,4										
A,5										
A,6										
A,7										
A,8										
A,9										
A,10										

NEVER TAKE INSURANCE

BASIC STRATEGY

Chart D

Multiple Deck • Double Down on Split Allowed • No Surrender • Dealer Stands on Soft 17

PLAYER'S		DEALER'S UPCARD									
HAND		2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	A
5											S
6											S
7											S
8											
9											
10											
11											
12											S
13											S
14										S	S
15										S	S
16									S	S	S
17											S
18											
19											
20											
21											
A, A											
2, 2											
3, 3											
4, 4											
5, 5											
6, 6											
7, 7										S	
8, 8										S	S
9, 9											
10, 10											
A 2											
A 3											
A 4											
A 5											
A 6											
A 7											
A 8											
A 9											
A 10											

NEVER TAKE INSURANCE

4. THE USTON PLUS/MINUS COUNT

As the cards are dealt in a game of blackjack the odds continually change, swinging back and forth between the House and the player. As cards are depleted from the shoe, the character of the shoe changes, depending upon the discards which have been made.

Aces

When the shoe is rich in aces, the player is more likely to receive a blackjack. Although the dealer is equally likely to receive a blackjack, the player is paid a bonus at the rate of 3 to 2 while the dealer's blackjack merely results in the player losing the amount that is bet on a one-to-one basis. Thus, the greater the likelihood of blackjacks occurring, the more favorable the shoe is for the player.

Tens

When the shoe is rich in tens, the dealer is more likely to bust since he must draw cards to "stiffs" of 12, 13, 14, 15 or 16. The player, on the other hand, can alter his play and not draw to his stiff hands if he knows the shoe is heavy in tens. Also, a blackjack is more likely to occur in this situation since the ten is one of the required components. The player who keeps track of the character of the shoe can thus determine when the percentage has swung in his favor and make larger bets in those situations and smaller bets in less favorable situations. He will tend to have most of his winning hands when he has larger bets and most of his losing hands occur when he has smaller bets. At the same time, he can alter his playing strategy with any given hand based on his knowledge of the content of the shoe, and thus increase his chance of winning any individual hand. In favorable situations (when the deck is rich in tens) the player will tend to: A) stand more since he does not want to hit his stiffs and risk busting; B) double down more since he is more likely to draw a ten on a good doubling down hand such as an eleven; and C) split pairs more since with certain pairs such as tens, the player is more likely to draw additional tens and get good hands. With this principle understood, the concept of certain exotic plays like splitting tens becomes more understandable. For instance, if the player has a pair of tens and the dealer's up card is a six and the shoe is rich in tens,

the player's chances of drawing an additional ten to his split cards is favorable; and at the same time the chances that the dealer's hole card is a ten and that he will draw an additional ten to bust is high. The problem for the player becomes one of objectively characterizing the remaining cards in the shoe so that playing and betting decisions can be made without taxing all his mental energies.

The Uston Simple Plus/Minus System

Experience has shown that basic strategy will supply the correct playing move in approximately 80% of the situations. If the 20% of times that a variation should be made from this basic strategy could be recognized and executed, the player would be playing perfect blackjack. The Simple Plus/Minus System helps the player recoup many of these situations where a playing strategy error would have otherwise been made. At the same time, it incorporates a betting strategy which can help the player increase his bets when the shoe is favorable and decrease them when the shoe is unfavorable.

Card Values

We have seen that when small cards are depleted from the shoe, the remaining cards tend to become more favorable for the player since there is an increased concentration of tens and aces. Thus, the small cards are assigned "plus" values. In the Simple Plus/Minus System, the player counts "plus" one whenever a 3, 4, 5, 6, or 7 is played. Two, 8, and 9 are counted as a zero. Ten value cards and aces are counted as minus 1. Thus, as small cards are played, the running count increases representing the fact that the shoe is more favorable to the player. If a string of tens and aces are depleted from the shoe, the count goes down representing the devaluation of the shoe with respect to the player.

You need to memorize the card values in this system until you know them cold. There is no time in a real casino situation to sit at the table and think about what the card values are. A little bit of practice will make remembering them an automatic process. The first Simple Plus/Minus drill provided in the *Ken Uston's Professional Blackjack* program will facilitate quick memorization of this values. The next step is to be able to count down

a series of cards, immediately recognizing their values and adding them to a running tally. Using the Simple Plus/Minus drill, you can learn to keep a running count on a series of cards as they flash by at speeds higher than two cards a second. Once you obtain this speed, you can comfortably maintain a running count in casino conditions.

Experience has shown that it is easier to count cards by pairs. This is useful since cards are often revealed two at a time, particularly in games where the first two cards are dealt face down to each player. Pairs which contain one minus card and one plus card have a net value of zero. Quick recognition of these pairs will facilitate a rapid count (Table 4.1).

**SIMPLE PLUS/MINUS CARD COMBINATIONS WITH
A NET VALUE OF ZERO**

10,3	A,3	2,2
10,4	A,4	2,8
10,5	A,5	2,9
10,6	A,6	8,8
10,7	A,7	8,9
		9,9

TABLE 4.1

Simple Plus/Minus Count Strike Numbers

The purpose of keeping the count, of course, is to be able to bet more in favorable situations and less in unfavorable situations, and to vary the play of the hands according to the contents of the shoe.

Let's compare two situations. Assume we have a plus ten count in a single deck game where half the cards have been dealt and the other half remain. Now assume a second situation in which we have a plus ten count in a six deck game in which again half a deck of cards have been dealt but now five and a half decks remain. Clearly there is a greater concentration of tens and aces in the single deck example with a plus ten count and 26 cards remaining to be played than the second example where the extra tens and aces are mixed in with 286 cards. To reflect this, we have developed what we call "strike" numbers. These numbers determine when the bets should be increased or decreased and when the play of the hand should be varied. Strike numbers have been formulated utilizing the number of decks in a given game as well as the player's average expectation in that

game based on the rules variations in effect. We have supplied a customized set of strike numbers calculated for every casino available on this program.

Strike numbers are utilized in the following manner. If the running count is greater than or equal to the positively signed value of the strike number, plus strategy should be utilized. If the running count is less than (a larger negative number) the negatively signed value of the strike number, minus strategy should be utilized. If the running count is in between these two, basic strategy should be utilized.

Simple Plus/Minus Betting Strategy

The Simple Plus/Minus player must first determine the size of his betting unit which is in turn dependent upon how much capital he wishes to risk in his blackjack endeavors. The ratio of the average betting unit to the size of the player's bank helps predict what is known as the "element of ruin." This concept will be developed further in a later chapter.

The betting strategy is based on multiples of the base betting unit. Utilizing the strike number, the player should determine whether he should use the plus strategy, the minus strategy or basic strategy in a given hand. The basic strategy is to be utilized if the player should bet two units and play the appropriate basic strategy for the given hand. If it is determined that the plus strategy should be used, the player should bet four units and play the appropriate strategy. If it is determined that the minus strategy should be used, the player should bet one unit and use the appropriate minus strategy as determined from the playing strategy charts provided at the end of this chapter. An example will help clarify the appropriate use of these numbers.

The casino which we shall imagine ourselves playing in has a single deck game and, based on the fact that it is a single deck game, and because of its specific rules variations, it has been determined that the strike number is 2. At the start of play, our running count in the Simple Plus/Minus System is zero. It is appropriate at this point to play basic strategy and bet two units. If after some play, the running count runs up greater than plus 2, it would be time to switch to the plus strategy and bet four units. If later on in the game, the count runs below minus two, you should switch to the minus strategy as depicted on the playing strategy chart and bet one unit per hand.

From the above example, it can be seen that you should play basic strategy and bet two units when the running count is between the negative value of the strike number and the positive value of the strike number. Thus, if a strike number is six, basic strategy should be played as long as the running count is between minus six and plus six. If the count exceeds plus six, the plus strategy should be used and if the count dips below six, (e.g. a more negative number such as minus seven) the minus strategy should be employed.

The Simple Plus/Minus Playing Strategy

As pointed out earlier, basic strategy will supply the correct move in approximately 80% of actual play situations. By using the card counting system, many of the other twenty percent of the hands can be played to advantage. If you examine the simple plus/minus playing strategy charts included at the end of this chapter, you will notice they closely resemble the respective basic strategy charts. The situations where the plus/minus counts can alter the playing strategy are represented by the boxes which are subdivided into three sections. In those boxes, the middle section represents the basic strategy move that should be utilized when the running count is within the plus and minus range of the strike number. When the running count exceeds the positive value of the strike number, the plus strategy should be utilized and is represented in the right most subdivision of the box. When the running count is more negative than the minus value of the strike number, the minus strategy should be utilized and this is dictated in the left most subdivision of the box. For instance, in the Uston Simple Plus/Minus chart which applies to multiple deck games with double down on split allowed, no surrender and the dealer stands on soft 17; if the player's hand is a hard 8 and the dealer's up card is 6, and if basic strategy is the appropriate play as determined by the count of the strike number, the player should hit. If the minus strategy is the appropriate move, the correct move is still for the player to hit. If the plus strategy is the correct move, the player should double down. It can be seen from these charts that a relatively small number of the boxes contain modifications of basic strategy when using the Uston Simple Plus/Minus System. This system gives the player a small, but definite statistical advantage over the House, even in many unfavorable rules variations situations. The program's Simple Plus/Minus drill number 2 can help you quickly learn the appropriate playing strategy variations.

USTON SIMPLE PLUS/MINUS

Chart E

Single Deck • No Double Down on Split Allowed • No Surrender

PLAYER'S HAND	DEALER'S UPCARD									
	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	A
5										
6										
7										
8										
9										
10										
11										
12										
13										
14										
15										
16										
17										
18										
19										
20										
21										
A, A										
2, 2										
3, 3										
4, 4										
5, 5										
6, 6										
7, 7										
8, 8										
9, 9										
10, 10										
A 2										
A 3										
A 4										
A 5										
A 6										
A 7										
A 8										
A 9										
A 10										

TAKE INSURANCE WITH PLUS STRATEGY. *THIS SHOULD BE "HIT" IF DEALER IS ALLOWED TO HIT SOFT 17.

USTON SIMPLE PLUS/MINUS

Chart F

Single Deck • Double Down Only with 10 or 11 • No Surrender • Dealer Hits Soft 17 • No Double Down on Split Hands

PLAYER'S		DEALER'S UPCARD									
HAND		2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	A
5											
6											
7											
8											
9											
10											
11											
12											
13											
14											
15											
16											
17											
18											
19											
20											
21											
A, A											
2, 2											
3, 3											
4, 4											
5, 5											
6, 6											
7, 7											
8, 8											
9, 9											
10, 10											
A 2											
A 3											
A 4											
A 5											
A 6											
A 7											
A 8											
A 9											
A 10											

TAKE INSURANCE WITH PLUS STRATEGY

USTON SIMPLE PLUS/MINUS

Chart G

Multiple Deck • No Double Down on Split Allowed • No Surrender

PLAYER'S HAND	DEALER'S UP CARD										
	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	A	
5											
6											
7											
8											
9											
10											
11											
12											
13											
14											
15											
16											
17											
18											
19											
20											
21											
A, A											
2, 2											
3, 3											
4, 4											
5, 5											
6, 6											
7, 7											
8, 8											
9, 9											
10, 10											
A 2											
A 3											
A 4											
A 5											
A 6											
A 7											
A 8											
A 9											
A 10											

TAKE INSURANCE WITH PLUS STRATEGY

USTON SIMPLE PLUS/MINUS

Chart H

Multiple Deck • Double Down on Split Allowed • No Surrender • Dealer Stands on Soft 17

PLAYER'S HAND	DEALER'S UP CARD									
	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	A
5										SS
6										SS
7										SS
8										
9										
10										
11										
12										S
13										S
14									SS	S
15									S	S
16								SS	SS	S
17										S
18										
19										
20										
21										
A, A										
2, 2										
3, 3										
4, 4										
5, 5										
6, 6										
7, 7									S	
8, 8									S	S
9, 9										
10, 10										
A 2										
A 3										
A 4										
A 5										
A 6										
A 7										
A 8										
A 9										
A 10										

TAKE INSURANCE WITH PLUS STRATEGY

5. THE USTON ADVANCED PLUS/MINUS SYSTEM

After you have mastered the Simple Plus/Minus count and wish to upgrade your play to that of a professional level system, you can use the same card values that you have become familiar with from the Simple Plus/Minus System and apply them to the Uston Advanced Plus/Minus System. This is a professional level system which has been used successfully by many card counters to earn their living.

To apply the system, you must utilize the same card values and techniques of maintaining a running count as you learned with Simple Plus/Minus System. An additional step must be taken before the card count can be utilized. It must be converted from a running count to what is termed a "true" count. "Strike" numbers were utilized in the Simple Plus/Minus System to reflect the number of decks being played with. The professional player needs to account not only for the number of decks in the shoe, but more importantly, how far into the shoe the play has progressed at every point in the game. As pointed out earlier, a plus ten count after twenty-six cards have been played in a one deck shoe is much more potent than a plus ten count after twenty-six cards have been played in a six deck shoe. In the latter situation, the plus ten count is diluted into a much larger pile of cards remaining to be played. This factor is reflected in both the Advanced Plus/Minus count and the Uston Advanced Point Count (to be discussed in the next chapter) by the player converting his running count to the true count by dividing it by the number of half decks remaining to be played. To do this, you must train your eye so that it can automatically calibrate a stack of cards sitting in the discard rack. The Advanced Plus/Minus drills and the Uston APC drills will help you accomplish this. In addition, in all simulations of multiple deck casino play in Ken Uston's *Professional Blackjack*, a discard rack will be present on the screen.² As hands are played, the used cards will be placed in the discard rack. Proportionality of both card width and stack height are as true to scale as computer hardware will allow. The visual representation of the cards in the discard rack is accurate enough to train your eye for actual casino play.

As mentioned earlier, the running count is adjusted by dividing it by the number of half decks

remaining in the shoe. Since the discard pile is more open to examination than the shoe, we estimate the number of half decks in the discard pile and use this figure to derive the number of half decks remaining in the shoe. For example, if you are playing in a six deck game and you estimate that there are two half-decks' worth of cards in the discard rack (or one whole deck), you would then predict that there are ten half decks remaining in the shoe. You would then adjust the running count to a true count by dividing it by ten. If, in this instance, the running count was plus 20, the true count would be plus 2.

The technique of converting the running count to a true count by dividing by the number of half decks remaining in the shoe is useful in all multiple deck play but becomes difficult in single deck play. Table 5.1 demonstrates this fact more clearly. For example, when seven cards have been dealt in a single deck game, and forty five cards remain, the theoretical conversion factor for the number of half decks remaining would be one and three quarters. It is difficult to sit at a casino blackjack table and divide your running count by one and three quarters. Because of this, we have developed a table of reciprocals for each conversion factor. Multiplying the running count by the reciprocal of the conversion factor is equivalent to dividing running counts by the conversion factor. We have found that it is much easier to perform the former operation in actual casino playing and recommend that these reciprocals be used. Thus, for example, if you were in a single deck game and estimated that thirteen cards (or a quarter of the deck) was sitting in the discard pile, you would multiply the running count by .67 (or two thirds). If, for instance, the running count was plus six and approximately thirteen cards were sitting in the discard pile, you would adjust the running count by multiplying it by two thirds and would obtain a true count of plus 4.

Our experience has shown that it is difficult to train your eye to accurately gauge small fractions of a single deck in a discard pile. We have developed a short cut that simplifies single deck play. This short cut is based on the fact that on the average, 2.7 cards are played for every hand (including the dealer's). Thus, if you count the

²This statement is true for all versions of this program where the hardware and operating system provide the feasibility.

number of hands on the table (including yours and the dealer) and multiply by 2.7, on average you will have a close gauge of the number of cards in the discard pile. To support the use of this technique for calculating the true count, the program will evaluate your moves assuming that you are counting the hands played and multiplying by 2.7 following by selection of the appropriate reciprocal conversion factor as memorized from Table 5.2. Unplayed hands remaining on the table at the time you have to make a decision should be counted as 3/4 of a hand since they only contain 2 cards. So if you sit in the first seat at a full table (7 players,

1 dealer), there should be 8 unplayed hands on the table as you begin to play your hand. This is equivalent to 6 played hands ($8 \times 3/4$) and the correct reciprocal conversion factor is 0.7 if you are in the first round of play. If one round of play with a full table had preceded, there would be 14 played hands ($8 + 8 \times 3/4$) and the correct reciprocal conversion factor would be 1.9.

The appropriate reciprocal conversion factor must, of course, be multiplied by the running count to obtain the true count. We will not display a discard rack during single deck play.

Number of Cards Dealt	Number of Cards Remaining	Conversion Factor (= Number of Half Decks Remaining)	Reciprocal of the Conversion Factor
0	52	2	.50
7	45	1 3/4	.60
13	39	1 1/2	.67
19	33	1 1/4	.80
26	26	1	1.00
32	20	3/4	1.30
39	13	1/2	2.00

TABLE 5.1

Hands Played	Reciprocal Conversion Factor
1	0.5
2	0.5
3	0.6
4	0.6
5	0.7
6	0.7
7	0.8
8	0.9
9	0.9
10	1.0
11	1.2
12	1.3
13	1.5
14	1.9
15	2.4
16	2.9
17	4.3
18	8.7

TABLE 5.2

After you have calculated the true count, the correct playing strategy can be determined from the information contained in the Advanced Plus/Minus playing charts included at the end of this chapter. Again, you will notice that in the majority of situations, basic strategy alone suggests the correct move. There are, however, a number of playing situations on these charts in which the value of the true count will suggest an alteration from basic strategy for a more appropriate move. These situations are represented on the charts by the boxes which are subdivided into two colors and contain a number. The number represents a true count threshold. In the case of positive numbers, if the true count equals or exceeds that number, basic strategy moves depicted in the left-hand side of the box should be abandoned and the move suggested by the color on the right-hand side of the box should be executed. In the case of negative numbers, if the true count is more negative (a larger negative number such as minus 8 being more negative than minus 7), the basic strategy play as depicted in the right hand side of the box should be abandoned and the move suggested by

the color on the left hand side of the box should be executed.³ These number matrices are best learned by a flash card type drill. **Ken Uston's Professional Blackjack** provides such a training routine in the Advanced Plus/Minus training drill.

The same betting strategy can be employed as with the Simple Plus/Minus System. To do this, the appropriate strike number of the game at hand must be known. If the running count is greater than or equal to the positive strike number, the correct bet would be four units. If the running count is between the negative and the positive value of the strike number, the correct bet would be two units. If the running count is less than, or equal to, the negative value of the strike number, one unit would be the appropriate bet.

Also included at the end of this chapter and chapter 6, are a series of tables for modifying the Advance Plus/Minus and APC color charts to reflect other rules variations. The charts that we selected to construct for you are useful in the majority of casinos included in this program. The modification tables are provided so that you can train for play in casinos with other rules combinations.

³There are a few anomalies to these basic axioms which will become apparent when you closely study the color charts.

USTON ADVANCED PLUS/MINUS

Chart I

Single Deck • No Double Down on Split • No Surrender • Dealer Stands on Soft 17

PLAYER'S HAND	DEALER'S UPCARD									
	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	A
5										
6										
7			+6	+5	+5					
8	+8	+5	+3	+2	+1	+7				
9	+1	-½	-1	-3	-3	+2	+4			
10	-5	-5	-6	-6	-7	-3	-2	-1	+2	+2
11	-6	-7	-7	-7	-8	-5	-3	-2	-2	-1
12	+2	+1	0	-1	-1					
13	-½	-1	-2	-3	-3					
14	-2	-3	-4	-4	-4	+8				+7
15	-3	-4	-4	-5	-5	+6	+6	+4	+2	+5
16						+6	+5	+3	0	+4
17										-4
18										
19										
20										
21										
A, A	-8	-8	-8	-8	-8	-6	-5	-4	-5	-5
2, 2	+4	+1	-2	-3						
3, 3	+4	+2	-2	-2		-6				
4, 4	+8	+5	+3	+2	+1	+7				
5, 5	-5	-5	-6	-6	-7	-3	-2	-1	+2	+2
6, 6	0	0	-2	-3	-4					
7, 7	-6	-7	-8	-9					-1	
8, 8									+4	
9, 9	0	-2	-3	-3	-3	+4	-5	-6		+3
10, 10	+6	+4	+3	+3	+3	+7				
A 2		+4	+2	-2	-2					
A 3		+4	+½	-2	-3					
A 4		+3	-½	-3	-5					
A 5		+2	-2	-4	-7					
A 6	-½	-3	-4	-6	-7					
A 7	+1	-2	-4	-5	-6					-½
A 8	+5	+3	+2	+½	+½	+8				
A 9	+5	+5	+4	+3	+3	+7				
A 10										

TAKE INSURANCE WITH TRUE COUNT OF + 1 OR MORE

USTON ADVANCED PLUS/MINUS

Chart J

Single Deck • No Double Down on Split • No Surrender • Dealer Hits Soft 17

PLAYER'S HAND	DEALER'S UPCARD									
	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	A
5										
6										
7			+6	+5	+5					
8	+8	-5	+3	+2	+1	+7				
9	+1	-½	-1	-3	-3	+2	+4			
10	-5	-5	-6	-6	-7	-3	-2	-1	+2	+2
11	-6	-7	-7	-7	-8	-5	-3	-2	-2	-1
12	+2	+1	0	-1	-3					
13	-½	-1	-2	-3	-3					
14	-2	-3	-4	-4	-5	+8				+5
15	-3	-4	-4	-5	-7	+6	+6	+4	+2	+3
16					-8	+6	+5	+3	0	+2
17										-3
18										
19										
20										
21										
A, A	-8	-8	-8	-8	-8	-6	-5	-4	-5	-5
2, 2	+4	+1	-2	-3						
3, 3	+4	+2	-2	-2		+6				
4, 4	+8	+5	+3	+2	+1	+7				
5, 5	-5	-5	-6	-6	-7	-3	-2	-1	+2	+2
6, 6	0	0	-2	-3	-4					
7, 7	-6	-7	-8	-9					-1	
8, 8									+4	
9, 9	0	-2	-3	-3	-5	+4	-5	-6		+3
10, 10	+6	+4	+3	+3	+3	+7				
A 2		+4	+2	-2	-2					
A 3		+4	+½	-2	-3					
A 4		+3	-½	-3	-5					
A 5		+2	-2	-4	-8					
A 6	-½	-3	-4	-6	-8					
A 7	+1	-2	-4	-5	-7					
A 8	+5	+3	+2	+½	+½	+8				
A 9	+5	+5	+4	+3	+3	+7				
A 10										

TAKE INSURANCE WITH TRUE COUNT OF +1 OR MORE

USTON ADVANCED PLUS/MINUS

Chart K

Single Deck • Double Down Only with 10 or 11 • No Surrender • Dealer Hits Soft 17 • No Double Down on Split Hands

PLAYER'S HAND	DEALER'S UPCARD										
	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	A	
5											
6											
7											
8											
9											
10	- 5	- 5	- 6	- 6	- 7	- 3	- 2	- 1	+ 2	+ 2	
11	- 6	- 7	- 7	- 7	- 8	- 5	- 3	- 2	- 2	- 1	
12	+ 2	+ 1	0	- 1	- 3						
13	- ½	- 1	- 2	- 3	- 3						
14	- 2	- 3	- 4	- 4	- 5	+ 8				+ 5	
15	- 3	- 4	- 4	- 5	- 7	+ 6	+ 6	+ 4	+ 2	+ 3	
16					- 8	+ 6	+ 5	+ 3	0	+ 2	
17										- 3	
18											
19											
20											
21											
A, A	- 8	- 8	- 8	- 8	- 8	- 6	- 5	- 4	- 5	- 5	
2, 2	+ 4	+ 1	- 2	- 3							
3, 3	+ 4	+ 2	- 2	- 2		+ 6					
4, 4											
5, 5	- 5	- 5	- 6	- 6	- 7	- 3	- 2	- 1	+ 2	+ 2	
6, 6	0	0	- 2	- 3	- 4						
7, 7	- 6	- 7	- 8	- 9					- 1		
8, 8									+ 4		
9, 9	0	- 2	- 3	- 3	- 5	+ 4	- 5	- 6		+ 3	
10, 10	+ 6	+ 4	+ 3	+ 3	+ 3	+ 7					
A 2											
A 3											
A 4											
A 5											
A 6											
A 7											
A 8											
A 9											
A 10											

TAKE INSURANCE WITH TRUE COUNT OF + 1 OR MORE

USTON ADVANCED PLUS/MINUS

Chart L

Multiple Deck • No Double Down on Split • No Surrender • Dealer Stands on Soft 17

PLAYER'S HAND	DEALER'S UPCARD									
	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	A
5										
6										
7			+6	+5	+5					
8	+8	+5	+3	+2	+1	+7				
9	+1	+½	+1	+3	+3	+2	+4			
10	+5	+5	+6	+6	+7	+3	+2	+1	+2	+2
11	+6	+7	+7	+7	+8	+5	+3	+2	+2	+½
12	+2	+1	0	-1	-1					
13	+½	+1	+2	+3	+3					
14	+2	+3	+4	+4	+4	+8				+7
15	+3	+4	+4	+5	+5	+6	+6	+4	+2	+5
16						+6	+5	+3	0	+4
17										-4
18										
19										
20										
21										
A, A	-8	-8	-8	-8	-8	-6	-5	-4	-5	-3
2, 2	+4	+1	-2	-3						
3, 3	+4	+2	-2	-2		+6				
4, 4	+8	+5	+3	+2	+1	+7				
5, 5	+5	+5	+6	+6	+7	+3	+2	+1	+2	+2
6, 6	+2	0	-2	-3	-4					
7, 7	-6	-7	-8	-9						
8, 8									+4	
9, 9	-1	-2	-3	-3	-3	+4	-5	-6		+3
10, 10	+6	+4	+3	+3	+3	+7				
A 2		+4	+2	0	-2					
A 3		+4	+½	-2	-3					
A 4		+3	+½	-3	-5					
A 5		+2	-2	-4	-7					
A 6	+½	-3	-4	-6	-7					
A 7	+1	-2	-4	-5	-6					+1
A 8	+5	+3	+2	+½	+½	+8				
A 9	+5	+5	+4	+3	+3	+7				
A 10										

TAKE INSURANCE WITH TRUE COUNT OF + 1½ OR MORE

USTON ADVANCED PLUS/MINUS

Chart M

Multiple Deck • No Double Down on Split • No Surrender • Dealer Hits Soft 17

PLAYER'S		DEALER'S UPCARD									
HAND		2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	A
5											
6											
7				+6	+5	+5					
8		+8	-5	+3	+2	+1	+7				
9		-1	-½	-1	-3	-3	+2	+4			
10		-5	-5	-6	-6	-7	-3	-2	-1	+2	+2
11		-6	-7	-7	-7	-8	-5	-3	-2	-2	+½
12		+2	+1	0	-1	-3					
13		-½	-1	-2	-3	-3					
14		-2	-3	-4	-4	-5	+8				+5
15		-3	-4	-4	-5	-7	+6	+6	+4	+2	+3
16						-8	+6	+5	+3	0	+2
17											-3
18											
19											
20											
21											
A, A		-8	-8	-8	-8	-8	-6	-5	-4	-5	-3
2, 2		+4	+1	-2	-3						
3, 3		+4	+2	-2	-2		+6				
4, 4		+8	+5	+3	+2	+1	+7				
5, 5		-5	-5	-6	-6	-7	-3	-2	-1	+2	+2
6, 6		+2	0	+2	-3	-4					
7, 7		-6	-7	-8	-9						
8, 8										+4	
9, 9		-1	-2	-3	-3	-5	+4	-5	-6		+3
10, 10		+6	+4	+3	+3	+3	+7				
A 2			+4	+2	0	-2					
A 3			+4	+½	-2	-3					
A 4			+3	-½	-3	-5					
A 5			+2	-2	-4	-8					
A 6		+½	-3	-4	-6	-8					
A 7		+1	-2	-4	-5	-7					
A 8		+5	+3	+2	+½	+½	+8				
A 9		+5	+5	+4	+3	+3	+7				
A 10											

TAKE INSURANCE WITH TRUE COUNT OF + 1½ OR MORE

USTON ADVANCED PLUS/MINUS

Chart N

Multiple Deck • Double Down on Split • No Surrender • Dealer Stands on Soft 17

PLAYER'S HAND	DEALER'S UPCARD										
	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	A	
5											
6											
7			+ 6	+ 5	+ 5						
8	+ 8	+ 5	+ 3	+ 2	+ 1	+ 7					
9	+ 1	- ½	- 1	- 3	- 3	+ 2	+ 4				
10	- 5	- 5	- 6	- 6	- 7	- 3	- 2	- 1	+ 2	+ 2	
11	- 6	- 7	- 7	- 7	- 8	- 5	- 3	- 2	- 2	+ ½	
12	+ 2	+ 1	0	- 1	- 1						
13	- ½	- 1	- 2	- 3	- 3						
14	- 2	- 3	- 4	- 4	- 4	+ 8				+ 7	
15	- 3	- 4	- 4	- 5	- 5	+ 6	+ 6	+ 4	+ 2	+ 5	
16						+ 6	+ 5	+ 3	0	+ 4	
17										- 4	
18											
19											
20											
21											
A, A											
2, 2	- 2	- 3	- 4	- 5	- 7						
3, 3	- 1	- 4	- 6	- 6	- 8						
4, 4		+ 4	+ 2	0	- ½						
5, 5	- 5	- 5	- 6	- 6	- 7	- 3	- 2	- 1	+ 2	+ 2	
6, 6	- 1	- 2	- 3	- 4	- 6						
7, 7											
8, 8											
9, 9	- 2	- 3	- 3	- 4	- 4	+ 2				+ 4	
10, 10											
A 2		+ 4	+ 2	0	- 2						
A 3		+ 4	+ ½	- 2	- 3						
A 4		+ 3	- ½	- 3	- 5						
A 5		+ 2	- 2	- 4	- 7						
A 6	+ ½	- 3	- 4	- 6	- 7						
A 7	+ 1	- 2	- 4	- 5	- 6						
A 8	+ 5	+ 3	+ 2	+ ½	+ ½	+ 8					
A 9	+ 5	+ 5	+ 4	+ 3	+ 3	+ 7					
A 10											

TAKE INSURANCE WITH TRUE COUNT OF + 1 ½ OR MORE

ADVANCED PLUS/MINUS MODIFICATION CHARTS

EARLY SURRENDER (*es)

Player's Hand	Dealer's Up Card			
	8	9	10	A
5			+6	0
6			+6	-3
7			+7	-5
12				-5
13	+7	+5	+2	-7
14	+6	+4	0	Su
15	+4	+2	-2	Su
16	+4	0	-3	Su
17		+6	+3	Su
2,2			+7	+1
7,7	+6	+4	0	Su
8,8		+4	-2	Su

Su = always surrender

CONVENTIONAL SURRENDER (*cs)

Player's Hand	Dealer's Up Card			
	8	9	10	A
13	+7	+5	+3	+5
14	+6	+4	+2	+3
15	+4	+2	0	+1
16	+4	+1/0	-2	+1
17		+6	+5	
7,7	+6	+1	0	+1
8,8		+4	+2	

Where 2 numbers appear in a column, the left one is for single deck and the right one is for multiple deck.

If the true count is larger than the modification number, surrender instead of using basic strategy.

Replace the numbers in the color chart which you are modifying, with the numbers in the surrender modification chart that you have selected.

DOUBLE DOWN AFTER SPLIT ALLOWED (*d)

Player's Hand	Dealer's Up Card									
	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	A
A,A										
2,2	-2	-3	-4	-5	-7					
3,3	-1	-4	-6	-6	-8					
4,4		+4	+2	-2/0	-½					
6,6	-1	-2	-3	-4	-6					
7,7										
8,8										
9,9	-2	-3	-3	-4	-4	+2				+4
10,10										

DEALER HITS SOFT 17 (*h)

Player's Hand	Dealer's Up Card	
	6	A
12	-3	
13	-3	
14	-5	-5
15	-7	+3
16	-8	+2
17		-3
9,9	-5	+3
A,5	-8	
A,6	-8	
A,7	-7	Hit

Where 2 numbers appear in a column, the left one is for single deck and the right one is for multiple deck.

Shaded boxes indicate basic strategy should be used.

Always play 5,5 as if it were a hard 10.

Replace the entire set of numbers in the pair splitting section of the color chart which you are modifying with the numbers above.

Combinations where no numbers are given call for basic strategy.

6. THE USTON ADVANCED POINT COUNT

The most powerful possible card counting system would keep a side count of every denomination of card as it appears in the course of a game. With this complete data base, the player could most precisely predict the remaining content of the shoe, and make the absolutely perfect move in every situation. This is the "parameterized" card count. Unfortunately, we are not aware of any person who can consistently manage such a cumbersome system. Experience has shown that parameterized counts involve so much human error in actual application that their advantage over non-parameterized systems is quickly lost. The best non-parameterized card counting systems reconcile the need for the most accurate data base with the practical limits of human mentation. Of the handful of legitimate professional non-parameterized blackjack card-counting systems on the market today, the Uston Advanced Point Count is statistically the most powerful. It was devised by a thorough computer analysis of the game. It is also more difficult to learn than the

Uston Advanced Plus/Minus Count, but in the long run it will yield significantly higher winnings for the serious player.

Card Values

The first step in learning the Uston APC is to master the card values. You will note that values range from minus three to plus three. This greater variation in card values allows the system to reflect more accurately the true value of the cards for the player. You will also notice that the ace has a value of zero. This is because true value of the ace to the player is mostly reflected in proper betting strategy rather than playing strategy. The side count of aces maintained in the APC system is used directly to affect betting strategy. The card values shown in Table 6.1 are best learned through a flash card type system and one is provided by Ken Uston's Professional Blackjack in the Uston APC drill.

USTON APC CARD VALUES

Card Denomination	Card Value
2	+ 1
3	+ 2
4	+ 2
5	+ 3
6	+ 2
7	+ 2
8	+ 1
9	- 1
10	- 3
Ace	0

TABLE 6.1

After the card values are learned, you will need to learn to maintain a running count of a series of cards. Again, it is useful to learn to count cards in pairs since they are often revealed that way. By

recognizing pairs by a single value, time and mental energy used to maintain a count can be reduced. Table 6.2 depicts card combination values which can increase your running count proficiency.

Card Combination	Combined Value
10,10	-6
10,9	-4
10,2	
10,8	-2
9,9	
10,3	
10,4	-1
10,6	
10,7	
10,5	0
(2,8), 9	
(3,4,6,7), 9	+1
5,9	
2,2	+2
8,8	
2,8	
(3,4,6,7), (2,8)	+3
(3,4,6,7), (3,4,6,7)	+4
(2,8), 5	
(3,4,6,7), 5	+5
5,5	+6

TABLE 6.2

The Side Count of Aces

Computer analysis of the game has shown that the number of aces remaining in the shoe is critical to maintaining a proper betting strategy. Again, the ace is the most valuable card to the player and when many aces remain in the shoe, they should greatly increase the level of bets. It has been found that if the ace count is maintained through some physical device, it will become a matter of habit and not a mental burden. With a physical device

you won't waste effort maintaining the count mentally. A simple method for counting aces in single deck games is to use the four fingers on your left hand as a physical device to maintain the count. By touching the appropriate finger to your thumb, the rim of a drinking glass, your coffee cup, the table or some other object, you can keep track of the aces. Thus, for example, when the first ace is played you would touch the index finger of your left hand to your left thumb. After the second ace is played, the middle finger would touch the

thumb and so forth. In multiple deck play, we have found that the best way to maintain the count of aces is by using your feet. I have devised a system where each foot can go through a count of up to 8 aces at a time. Thus, if you start the count with your left foot and count the first 8 aces and then switch to your right foot and count the second 8

aces, you can then switch back to your left foot and count the third group of 8 aces which total to the 24 aces which could be encountered in six deck play. Naturally, in a two deck game, all the aces could be counted on one foot. Table 6.3 describes the foot position as the ace count in each block proceeds from one to eight.

Foot Position	Ace Count
Foot pointed straight forward, toes on ground, heel raised	1 ace
Foot pointing straight forward, instep down, outstep up	2 aces
Foot pointed straight forward, heel down and toes raised	3 aces
Foot pointed straight forward, outstep down and instep up	4 aces
Heel down, toes up and pointing to the left	5 aces
Heel down, toes up and pointing to the right	6 aces
Toes down, heel up and pointing to the left	7 aces
Toes down, heel up and pointing to the right	8 aces

TABLE 6.3

These movements may seem awkward at first. After a few hours of practice, you will find your foot moving automatically when an ace is seen. You won't even be aware of your foot position until you need to recall the number of aces played. It is useful to begin the foot counting technique even if you are preparing for single deck play. This will pay dividends when you use the same method in multiple deck play.

It will take about 20 hours of practice before you will be able to count a long string of cards at the rate of two per second using the card values in the Uston APC while maintaining a side count of aces. When you can do this with great precision, you will be ready for casino play. The Uston APC

drill in Ken Uston's Professional Blackjack will help you develop your skills quickly. The program also allows you to adjust the speed of the deal when practicing in the casino simulation, so you can gradually work your way up to casino speed.

The Uston APC Number Matrices

The Uston Advanced Point Count Number Matrices were devised from a computer analysis of the game. Utilizing the APC card values to maintain a count, these number matrices will dictate the optimum play in virtually every situation. These matrices are contained in the color coded charts at the end of this chapter. These charts are

structured in the same way as the Uston Advanced Plus/Minus charts. Again, you must maintain a running count and convert the running count to the true count by dividing it by the number of half decks remaining in the shoe. (The method of this calculation is described in detail in the Uston Advanced Plus/Minus chapter.) The true count is applied in these charts to predict the correct playing strategy in a given situation. Basic strategy still predicts the correct move in the majority of situations. In those cases where the true count can alter playing strategy, a number is found in the box and the box contains two colors. As with the earlier charts, if the number has a positive value and the true count equals or exceeds that number, basic strategy would be abandoned and the color on the right side of the box will signify the correct strategy. In boxes which contain a negative valued number, when the true count is a larger negative number, basic strategy should be abandoned and the color on the left hand side of the box should be used to suggest the correct strategy.

Ace Adjustment

As you recall, aces have a zero value because they don't have a strong statistical influence on how the hand should be played. However, aces are a significant determinant of the correct betting strategy. Thus, before placing a bet you must determine whether the shoe is unduly rich or poor in its relative number of aces. In the long run, two aces should be discarded for every half deck laying in the discard rack. So, there is half a deck in the discard rack and it contains no aces, the cards remaining in the shoe are "rich" by two aces. If there is a half deck in the discard rack and it con-

tains four aces, the remaining cards would be "poor" by two aces. If this had occurred in a single deck game, the remaining cards would, in fact, contain no aces. The values of ace-richness and ace-poorness directly effect our betting strategy. The ace conversion value is three. For each ace that the shoe is rich, you should add three to the value of the running count before determining the size of the bet. Remember that the size of the bet is determined before the hand is played and thus this process is performed at a different time than when the playing strategy is being calculated. (So, these calculations are not as confusing as they might appear.) Whenever the shoe is poor in aces, three points should be subtracted from the running count for each ace that is poor before determining the size of the bet.

Summary

Let's place you at an imaginary blackjack table. Given your pre-determined betting strategy (which we will cover shortly), you place your opening bet. As the cards are dealt, you count the card values until it comes time to play your hand. If your hand requires a "number decision," you convert your running count to the true count (without using the ace adjustment factor since aces do not effect the play of a hand) to determine the correct play. You execute your play, then sit and continue your running count as the dealer deals the rest of the cards in the hand and deals his own hand. As he settles all bets with the players, you take your running count and adjust it for ace-richness or ace-poorness and once again calculate your betting true count by using the conversion factor. You then place your bet according to your betting strategy.

$$\text{BTC} = \frac{\text{running count} + 3 \times (+ \text{\#aces rich or} - \text{\#aces poor})}{\text{number of half-decks remaining}}$$

USTON APC

Chart O

Single Deck • No Double Down on Split • No Surrender • Dealer Stands on Soft 17

PLAYER'S HAND		DEALER'S UP CARD									
		2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	A
5											
6											
7				+ 13	+ 12	+ 12					
8		- 14	+ 10	+ 7	+ 4	+ 3	+ 22				
9		0	1	- 3	- 6	- 7	+ 5	+ 11			
10		- 11	- 11	- 13	- 14	- 15	- 7	- 5	- 2	+ 5	+ 6
11		- 13	- 13	- 14	- 15	- 16	- 9	- 7	- 5	- 5	- 1
12		+ 3	+ 2	0	- 2	- 1					
13		- 1	- 2	- 4	- 5	- 5					+ 17
14		- 4	- 5	- 7	- 8	- 8	+ 18		+ 18	+ 9	+ 14
15		- 7	- 8	- 10	- 13	- 12	+ 20	+ 23	+ 11	+ 4	+ 12
16		- 11	- 12	- 15	- 16	- 14	+ 18	+ 20	+ 6	0	+ 10
17											- 8
18											
19											
20											
21											
A, A		- 14	- 14	- 14	- 15	- 16	- 12	- 10	- 10	- 10	- 7
2, 2		+ 10	+ 3	- 3	- 7						
3, 3		+ 11	+ 5	0	- 6		+ 10				
4, 4		+ 14	+ 10	+ 7	+ 4	+ 3	+ 22				
5, 5		- 11	- 11	- 13	- 14	- 15	- 7	- 5	- 2	+ 5	+ 6
6, 6		0	+ 1	- 3	- 7						
7, 7		- 10	- 13	- 15	- 18					- 2	
8, 8										+ 6	
9, 9		0	- 3	- 5	- 7	- 6	+ 10				+ 8
10, 10		+ 13	+ 10	+ 7	+ 5	+ 5	+ 19				
A 2			+ 6	+ 2	- 3	- 4					
A 3			+ 6	+ 1	- 6	- 7					
A 4			+ 4	0	- 8	- 9					
A 5			+ 4	- 5	- 9	- 14					
A 6		- 1	- 3	- 7	- 12	- 14	+ 13				
A 7		+ 4	- 2	- 5	- 8	- 7	+ 22				- 1
A 8		+ 11	+ 7	+ 4	+ 3	+ 3	+ 20				
A 9		+ 14	+ 11	+ 9	+ 7	+ 7	+ 23				
A 10											

TAKE INSURANCE WITH TRUE COUNT OF + 2 OR MORE

USTON APC

Chart P

Single Deck • No Double Down on Split • No Surrender • Dealer Hits Soft 17

PLAYER'S HAND	DEALER'S UPCARD									
	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	A
5										
6										
7			+13	+12	+12					
8	+14	+10	+7	+4	+3	+22				
9	0	-1	-3	-6	-7	+5	+11			
10	-11	-11	-13	-14	-15	-7	-5	-2	+5	+6
11	-13	-13	-14	-15	-16	-9	-7	-5	-5	-1
12	+3	+2	0	-2	-9					
13	-1	-2	-4	-5	-10					+17
14	-4	-5	-7	-8	-15	+18		+18	+9	+14
15	-7	-8	-10	-13	-21	+20	+23	+11	+4	+9
16	-11	-12	-15	-16	-23	+18	+20	+6	0	+7
17										-9
18										
19										
20										
21										
A, A	-14	-14	-14	-15	-16	-12	-10	-10	-10	-7
2, 2	+10	+3	-3	-7						
3, 3	+11	+5	0	-6		+10				
4, 4	+14	+10	+7	+4	+3	+22				
5, 5	-11	-11	-13	-14	-15	-7	-5	-2	+5	+6
6, 6	0	+1	-3	-7						
7, 7	-10	-13	-15	-18					-2	
8, 8									+6	
9, 9	0	-3	-5	-7	-14	+10				+5
10, 10	+13	+10	+7	+5	+5	+19				
A 2		+6	+2	-3	-4					
A 3		+6	+1	-6	-7					
A 4		+4	0	-8	-9					
A 5		+4	-5	-9	-25					
A 6	-1	-3	-7	-12	-25	+13				
A 7	+4	-2	-5	-8	-20	+22				
A 8	+11	+7	+4	+3	+3	+20				
A 9	+14	+11	+9	+7	+7	+23				
A 10										

TAKE INSURANCE WITH TRUE COUNT OF + 2 OR MORE

USTON APC

Chart Q

Single Deck • Double Down Only with 10 or 11 • No Surrender • Dealer Hits Soft 17 • No Double Down on Split Hands

PLAYER'S HAND		DEALER'S UP CARD									
		2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	A
5											
6											
7											
8											
9											
10		-11	-11	-13	-14	-15	-7	-5	-2	+5	+6
11		-13	-13	-14	-15	-16	-9	-7	-5	-5	-1
12		+3	+2	0	-2	-9					
13		-1	-2	-4	-5	-10					+17
14		-4	-5	-7	-8	-15	+18		+18	+9	+14
15		-7	-8	-10	-13	-21	+20	+23	+11	+4	+9
16		-11	-12	-15	-16	-23	+18	+20	+6	0	+7
17											-9
18											
19											
20											
21											
A, A		-14	-14	-14	-15	-16	-12	-10	-10	-10	-7
2, 2		-10	+3	-3	-7						
3, 3		-11	-5	0	-6		+10				
4, 4											
5, 5		-11	-11	-13	-14	-15	-7	-5	-2	+5	+6
6, 6		0	+1	-3	-7						
7, 7		-10	-13	-15	-18					-2	
8, 8										+6	
9, 9		0	-3	-5	-7	-14	+10				+5
10, 10		+13	+10	+7	+5	+5	+19				
A 2											
A 3											
A 4											
A 5											
A 6											
A 7											
A 8											
A 9											
A 10											

TAKE INSURANCE WITH TRUE COUNT OF + 2 OR MORE

USTON APC

Chart R

Multiple Deck • No Double Down on Split • No Surrender • Dealer Stands on Soft 17

PLAYER'S		DEALER'S UP CARD									
HAND	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	A	
5											
6											
7			+13	+12	+12						
8	+14	+10	+7	+4	+3	22					
9	+2	-1	-3	-6	-7	5	11				
10	11	11	-13	14	-15	7	5	-2	5	+6	
11	-13	13	14	15	16	-9	-7	-5	5	+2	
12	+3	+2	0	-2	-1						
13	-1	-2	-4	-5	-5					+17	
14	-4	-5	-7	-8	-8	+18		+18	+9	+14	
15	-7	-8	-10	-13	-12	+20	+23	+11	+4	+12	
16	-11	-12	-15	-16	-14	+18	+20	+6	0	+10	
17										-8	
18											
19											
20											
21											
A, A	-14	-14	-14	-15	-16	-12	-10	-10	-10	-5	
2, 2	+10	+3	-3	-7							
3, 3	+11	+5	0	-6		+10					
4, 4	+14	+10	+7	+4	+3	+22					
5, 5	-11	-11	-13	-14	-15	-7	-5	-2	+5	+6	
6, 6	+3	+1	-3	-7							
7, 7	-10	-13	-15	-18							
8, 8									+6		
9, 9	-1	-3	-5	-7	-6	+10				+8	
10, 10	+13	+10	+7	+5	+5	+19					
A 2		+6	+2	-3	-4						
A 3		+6	+1	-6	-7						
A 4		+4	0	-8	-9						
A 5		+4	-5	-9	-14						
A 6	+1	-3	-7	-12	-14	+13					
A 7	+4	-2	-5	-8	-7	+22				+2	
A 8	+11	+7	+4	+3	+3	+20					
A 9	+14	+11	+9	+7	+7	+23					
A 10											

TAKE INSURANCE WITH TRUE COUNT OF + 2½ OR MORE

USTON APC

Chart S

Multiple Deck • No Double Down on Split • No Surrender • Dealer Hits Soft 17

PLAYER'S		DEALER'S UPCARD									
HAND		2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	A
5											
6											
7				+ 13	+ 12	+ 12					
8		- 14	+ 10	+ 7	+ 4	+ 3	+ 22				
9		+ 2	- 1	- 3	- 6	- 7	+ 5	+ 11			
10		- 11	- 11	- 13	- 14	- 15	- 7	- 5	- 2	+ 5	+ 6
11		- 13	- 13	- 14	- 15	- 16	- 9	- 7	- 5	- 5	+ 2
12		+ 3	+ 2	0	- 2	- 9					
13		- 1	- 2	- 4	- 5	- 10					+ 17
14		- 4	- 5	- 7	- 8	- 15	+ 18		+ 18	+ 9	+ 14
15		- 7	- 8	- 10	- 13	- 21	+ 20	+ 23	+ 11	+ 4	+ 9
16		- 11	- 12	- 15	- 16	- 23	+ 18	+ 20	+ 6	0	+ 7
17											- 9
18											
19											
20											
21											
A, A		- 14	- 14	- 14	- 15	- 16	- 12	- 10	- 10	- 10	- 5
2, 2		+ 10	+ 3	- 3	- 7						
3, 3		+ 11	+ 5	0	- 6		+ 10				
4, 4		+ 14	+ 10	+ 7	+ 4	+ 3	+ 22				
5, 5		- 11	- 11	- 13	- 14	- 15	- 7	- 5	- 2	+ 5	+ 6
6, 6		+ 3	+ 1	- 3	- 7						
7, 7		- 10	- 13	- 15	- 18						
8, 8										+ 6	
9, 9		- 1	- 3	- 5	- 7	- 14	+ 10				+ 5
10, 10		+ 13	+ 10	+ 7	+ 5	+ 5	+ 19				
A 2			+ 6	+ 2	- 3	- 4					
A 3			+ 6	+ 1	- 6	- 7					
A 4			+ 4	0	- 8	- 9					
A 5			+ 4	- 5	- 9	- 25					
A 6		+ 1	- 3	- 7	- 12	- 25	+ 13				
A 7		+ 4	- 2	- 5	- 8	- 20	+ 22				
A 8		+ 11	+ 7	+ 4	+ 3	+ 3	+ 20				
A 9		+ 14	+ 11	+ 9	+ 7	+ 7	+ 23				
A 10											

TAKE INSURANCE WITH TRUE COUNT OF + 2½ OR MORE

USTON APC

Chart T

Multiple Deck • Double Down on Split Allowed • No Surrender • Dealer Stands on Soft 17

PLAYER'S HAND	DEALER'S UPCARD										
	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	A	
5											
6											
7			+13	+12	+12						
8	-14	+10	-7	-4	+3	+22					
9	-2	-1	3	6	-7	+5	+11				
10	-11	-11	-13	-14	-15	-7	5	-2	+5	+6	
11	-13	13	-14	-15	-16	-9	7	5	-5	+2	
12	+3	+2	0	-2	-1						
13	-1	-2	-4	-5	-5					+17	
14	-4	-5	-7	-8	-8	+18		+18	+9	+14	
15	-7	-8	-10	-13	-12	+20	+23	+11	+4	+12	
16	-11	-12	-15	-16	-14	+18	+20	+6	0	+10	
17										-8	
18											
19											
20											
21											
A, A											
2, 2	-3	-5	-7	-9							
3, 3	-3	-10									
4, 4		+10	+6	0	+1						
5, 5	-11	-11	-13	-14	-15	-7	-5	-2	+5	+6	
6, 6	-6	-7	-8								
7, 7											
8, 8											
9, 9	-4	-7	-7	-8	-8	+3				+7	
10, 10											
A 2		+6	+2	-3	-4						
A 3		+6	+1	-6	-7						
A 4		+4	0	-8	-9						
A 5		+4	-5	-9	-14						
A 6	+1	-3	-7	-12	-14	+13					
A 7	+4	-2	-5	-8	-7	+22				+2	
A 8	+11	+7	+4	+3	+3	+20					
A 9	+14	+11	+9	+7	+7	+23					
A 10											

TAKE INSURANCE WITH TRUE COUNT OF + 2½ OR MORE

ADVANCED POINT COUNT MODIFICATION CHARTS

EARLY SURRENDER (*es)

Player's Hand	Dealer's Up Card			
	8	9	10	A
5			+14	0
6			+11	-2
7			+11	-8
12				-8
13	+16	+13	+4	-12
14	+13	+6	0	Su
15	+10	+2	-4	Su
16	+10	+1	-7	Su
17		+13	-10	Su
2,2			+11	+1
7,7	+13	+6	0	Su
8,8		+10	-2	Su

Su = always surrender

CONVENTIONAL SURRENDER (*cs)

Player's Hand	Dealer's Up Card			
	8	9	10	A
13	+16	+13	+10	+13
14	+13	+6	+4	+6
15	+10	+2	-1	+2
16	+10	+1	-2	-1
17		+13	+13	
7,7	+13	+3	0	+2
8,8		+10	+3	

If the true count is larger than the modification number, surrender instead of using basic strategy.
Replace the numbers in the color chart that you are modifying with the numbers in the appropriate surrender modification chart.

DOUBLE DOWN AFTER SPLIT ALLOWED (*d)

Player's Hand	Dealer's Up Card									
	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	A
A,A										
2,2	-3	-5	-7	-9						
3,3	-3	-10								
4,4		-10	+6	-3/0	+1					
6,6	-6	-7	-8							
7,7										
8,8										
9,9	-4	-7	-7	-8	-8	+3				+7
10,10										

DEALER HITS SOFT 17 (*h)

Player's Hand	Dealer's Up Card	
	6	A
12	-9	
13	-10	
14	-15	+14
15	-21	+9
16	-23	+7
17		-9
9,9	-14	+5
A,5	-25	
A,6	-25	
A,7	-20	Hit

Where 2 numbers appear in a column, the left one is for single deck and the right one is for multiple deck.
Always play 5,5 as if it were a hard 10.
Replace the entire set of numbers in the pair splitting section of the chart which you are modifying with the numbers above.
Combinations where no numbers are given call for basic strategy.

7. DETERMINATION OF BETTING STRATEGY

It is important to understand the statistics involved in determining a proper bet size relative to the size of your bank. The statistical swings in blackjack are wide and losing streaks can continue for periods that are far longer than instinct might lead you to think. The determination of bet size requires a trade off between potential earnings on one hand and risks on the other. For example, if you were to place bets which ranged from \$1.00 to \$10.00, had a 2% statistical advantage against the House and financed this play with a \$10,000 bank, the chance of losing your bank or tapping out would be less than 1 in 1,000. But, at the typical casino speed of under 100 hands an hour, you would only earn about \$5.00 to \$7.00 per hour. If, however, you were to play with the same bank but were to range your bets from \$100 to \$1,000 a hand, you would earn \$500 to \$700 an hour but you would suffer a 40% chance of tapping out before you doubled your money.

In statistical terms, this earnings versus risks relationship is called the "element-of-ruin."

Our blackjack teams almost always use a betting strategy that has a 5% element-of-ruin. This means that during our playing sessions we have a 95% chance of doubling our bank against a 5% chance of tapping out completely. We hedge this even further during times when we have lost half our bank by cutting our betting in half, so we restore a 5% element-of-ruin factor. During a period of six years, we had almost 150 winning banks versus 6 losing banks. The element-of-ruin is determined by complex statistical algorithms which take into account the player's theoretical advantage against the House based on his level of blackjack play. It predicts the number of betting units that the bank should be broken into to yield the chosen element-of-ruin. It has been shown that if a player plays with an overall edge of $1\frac{1}{2}\%$ over the House, over the long run he should play with 110 units of the bankroll in order to incur a 5% element-of-ruin. If the player is playing with \$10.00 chips, a \$1,100 bank would be required. When you begin to practice one of the Uston counting strategies in the casino simulation provided with Ken Uston's Professional Blackjack, the element-of-ruin you incur will be based on the potential of the system you are using, the rules

variations in effect at that casino, and the number of betting units you have divided your bank into.

Once your base betting unit is determined, it can be applied in a scheme which allows you to raise your bet when appropriate and still play at a 5% risk of ruin. You will find that the betting strategy we are about to discuss is an aggressive one. It allows a range of bets from one unit to thirteen units depending on the count. To place such a wide range of bets, you must maintain a composure which does not alert the dealer and pit boss to the fact that you are a card counter. If you act like a counter, the chances are good that you will be barred from the casino.

The betting scheme we will now discuss was developed for the Uston Advanced Point Count and the Advanced Plus/Minus System.⁴ Both of these strategies are professional level systems although the former is more powerful. If you have mastered the Advanced Plus/Minus System and opt for the more aggressive betting strategy described in this chapter instead of the one based on strike numbers, you are again cautioned that you must learn to behave in a way which will not tip off the House that you are playing an intelligent and professional style of blackjack.

Table 7.1 depicts the Uston Advanced Plus/Minus running count and the betting true count and the appropriate size bet for each of these counts within the limits of a 5% element-of-ruin. When the Uston counts have a negative value, you should bet as little as possible or one betting unit. As you can see from Table 7.1, when the plus/minus count reaches +1 you can raise your bet to two units. In the APC system, when the betting true count reaches +3, you can raise your bet to two units.

If you play the APC, you will note that the pattern of raises in the bets has a simple correlation with rises in the betting true count. In nearly all cases, the number of betting units is about one less than the count. So we can summarize our betting strategy with this statement: **"bet the betting true count minus one in betting units."** You should limit your maximum bet to 12 times your base betting unit, since a 1-to-12 betting spread is the practical limit in actual playing situations. Larger spreads tend to

⁴The program, for purposes of evaluation, will assume that you are using this aggressive strategy only if you are practicing APC.

draw suspicion. In addition, it is prudent to reduce your base betting unit by 50% when your bank is reduced by 50%, in order to restore your 5% element-of-ruin. The Ken Uston's Professional Blackjack training program assumes that you will adhere to this advice.

The betting strategy emphasized above effectively summarizes all of the calculations in Table 7.1 for the APC player, and makes the betting strategy in a casino quite simple.

Let's summarize the steps that the APC player will take in actual casino play.

Sit down at a table and enter a game only at the beginning of a shoe. (If you enter in the middle of a shoe, the best you can play is basic strategy if you don't know what the count is at the point you join the game.) By the time you start playing, you will know how many betting units your bank contains, based on a maximum 5% element-of-ruin. Your opening bet should be one or two units, depending on whether or not the casino has favorable blackjack rules. Where house rules leave the player at a disadvantage of $-.35\%$ or more, a conservative opening bet is prudent. As cards are dealt, you maintain your running count. If

play requires a "number" decision when it comes around to your hand, just convert the running count to the true count (foregoing the ace-adjustment factor since aces do not effect the play of a given hand) and determine the correct play accordingly. Sit and maintain your running count as the dealer deals the rest of the cards. While the dealer settles bets, adjust your running count for aces to obtain the betting true count and subtract one from this number to determine the proper number of betting units for your next bet.

While professional level blackjack strategies are complex, experience shows them to be easier to master than bridge and chess; and the rewards can be much greater. Over the past five years, thousands of students have learned the Uston blackjack strategies. Ken Uston's Professional Blackjack is the quickest and easiest method yet devised for developing professional-level blackjack card-counting skills — and a perfect way of applying those skills in a way that provides fun without risk. To add to this fun, we have included some surprises in the casino simulation that should whet your appetite for actual casino play.

Enjoy playing and remember that in the long run good skill will outperform good luck.

Advanced Plus/Minus Running Count	Uston APC Betting True Count	The Player's Edge	Number of Betting Units Required for 5% Element-of-ruin	Bet Size (Number of Betting Units)
+1	+3	$+1\frac{1}{2}\%$	240	2
	+4	+1	150	2
+2	+5	$+1\frac{1}{2}$	110	3
	+6	+2	75	5
	+7	$+2\frac{1}{2}$	65	6
+3	+8	+3	55	7
	+9	$+3\frac{1}{2}$	45	8
+4	+10	+4	38	10
	+11	$+4\frac{1}{2}$	35	12
+5	+14	+5	32	13

TABLE 7.1

 **screenplay**

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